

IN HONOR OF GIRL SCOUTS

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Girl Scouts of the USA who are celebrating their 90th anniversary this week. Girl Scouts of the USA is the world's preeminent organization dedicated solely to girls.

There are 3.7 million Girl Scouts—2.7 million young women and 915,000 adult members. The first group of Girl Scouts was organized by Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of the Girl Scouts, on March 12, 1912. The Girl Scouts were chartered by the U.S. Congress on March 16, 1950.

Girl Scouts help girls develop their full individual potential; relate to others with increasing understanding, skill, and respect; and contribute to the improvement of society through their abilities, leadership skills, and cooperation with others. With myriad enriching experiences, such as fields trips, sports, skill-building clinics, community service projects, cultural exchanges, and environmental stewardships, the girls are able to fulfill the Girl Scouts mission.

Please join me in honoring the Girl Scouts for their continued effort in making girls grow stronger and develop their full potential.

ON THE FATE OF LCDR MICHAEL
"SCOTT" SPEICHER, USN, AND
AMERICA'S MISSING IN ACTION

HON. J. RANDY FORBES

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I am very distraught today over our failure to resolve the disappearance of LCDR Michael Scott Speicher. Commander Speicher was the first American lost in the 1991 gulf war. His F/A-18 Hornet was shot down west of Baghdad in the early morning hours of January 17. After Kuwait was liberated and the tenuous cease-fire agreement reached, the Iraqi Government returned remains of a person that was supposed to be Commander Speicher. DNA and blood type testing would reveal that it was not. Years later, after a debate over whether Commander Speicher was killed in action or simply missing, intelligence sources now believe that Commander Speicher may be alive and a prisoner of Iraq.

America has a moral obligation to every Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine, and Coast Guardsman that it sends into harm's way to accurately determine their fate and expend all efforts to return their remains to their families. Scott Speicher's family doesn't have closure because no search and rescue mission was ever launched. When a covert mission was proposed to go into Iraq in 1994 to investigate the crash site, a senior Pentagon official said, "I do not want to have to write letters home to the parents to tell them that their son or daughter died looking for old bones." Who will write the letter to Scott Speicher's family explaining why he may still be alive?

We cannot trust the Iraqis to help us. The Iraqi government has already failed to deliver

CDR Speicher or his remains at the end of the gulf war; and they delayed an investigation into the crash site until they had time to pick it over. Scott Speicher is the only American unaccounted for from the gulf war, but there are many unaccounted personnel missing from other conflicts. We need to renew our efforts to locate those who gave all in service of their country, and return them to their families.

INTRODUCTION OF WILDFIRE
RESOLUTION**HON. RICHARD W. POMBO**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, After seeing the destruction that happened last year during the fires seasons, I concluded that Congress must be prepared to respond to these catastrophic events before the 2002 wildfire season begins.

When forests catch fire, a catastrophic event occurs. These types of fires are extremely intense. The fires literally destroy every sign of life and can rage for thousands of acres. The costs of fighting these fires are astronomical. During the 2001 wildfire season, 81,681 fires burned 3,555,138 acres that killed 15 firefighters and threatened rural communities nationwide. The year before in 2000, more than 7.4 million acres burned—equivalent to a 6-mile-wide swath from Washington, DC to Los Angeles, CA. These fires destroyed 861 structures and cost the Federal government \$1.3 billion in suppression programs.

Quite simply, our Federal strategy to handle catastrophic wildfire is not adequately addressing a looming crisis. The Federal Government must take action to prevent the loss of wildlife habitat and protect rural communities.

This is why I am asking you to please join me in cosponsoring this Wildfire Resolution expressing the Sense of the U.S. Congress to: (1) fully implement the Western Governors Association "Collaborative 10-year Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment" and (2) to prepare a National Prescribed Fire Strategy that minimizes risks of escape. America needs to know Congress understands the forest-health crisis is causing these fires and that Congress is taking action.

In managing our forests, it is very important to remember that they are in constant transformation. A particular forest now will look much different in 10 years, and in about 50 years will not even look like the same forest. Sometimes a forest can get overpopulated with trees.

While some trees become diseased creating enormous amount of fuel that leads to catastrophic fires.

Reducing forest density and improving the ability of healthy forests to survive expansive wildfires must become the No. 1 priority for Federal forest managers. This is not a timber industry issue—it is a forest-health issue. Thinning practices necessary to ensure our forests are able to survive future catastrophic wildfires must begin without further delay.

It is time for Members of Congress to set aside political rhetoric and make the tough decisions necessary to end catastrophic losses of wildlife habitat, forest resources and most

importantly, human lives on all Federal forest lands. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

IN HONOR OF JASON DEAN
CUNNINGHAM**HON. ELTON GALLEGLY**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 14, 2002

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the heroic memory of Air Force Senior Airman Jason Dean Cunningham, who died March 4, 2002, during a firefight with America's enemies in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan. Airman Cunningham is to be laid to rest today in Arlington National Cemetery.

Jason lived briefly in my district with his wife, Theresa, and her parents, Lucy and Lito DeCastro, in Camarillo, CA. Jason's parents, Lawrence Dean and Jackie Cunningham, hail from Gallup, NM. Theresa joined the Navy after graduating from Rio Mesa High School and met Jason while both were stationed in Italy.

At that time, Jason also served in the Navy. He switched to the Air Force 2½ years ago to become a pararescueman—a paramedic who has trained at a special forces levels. Jason underwent 2 years of intense training in airborne, scuba and survival schools, search and rescue, and, of course, medical training to join this elite group of lifesavers. He was assigned to the 38th Rescue Squadron at Moody Air Force Base, near Valdosta, GA.

By all accounts, Jason was a dedicated and skilled airman, and a dedicated and loving family man. He and Theresa have two daughters, Kyla, 4, and Hannah, 2.

On March 4, he and six others died trying to rescue a Navy SEAL. It is important to remember them as well, for they fought by Jason's side and will be with him for all eternity: Sgt. Bradley Crose, 22, of Orange Park, Florida; Spc. Marc A. Anderson, 30, of Brandon, Florida; Pfc. Matthew A. Commons, 21, of Boulder City, Nevada; Petty Officer 1st Class Neil Roberts, 32, of Woodland, California; Tech. Sgt. John A. Chapman, 36, of Windsor Locks, Connecticut; and Army Sgt. Philip J. Svitak, 31, of Joplin, Missouri.

Jason is the second serviceman from my district to die in Afghanistan since the hostilities began. Special Forces Staff Sgt. Brian Cody Prosser of Frazier Park, CA, died in Afghanistan in December. Considering the relatively low casualty rate so far, that's a high percentage for a congressional district. But the people in my district were patriotic long before September 11. They believe strongly in freedom and know deep in their hearts that freedom often comes with a price. Jason and Brian joined the military to protect their families, friends and neighbors from America's enemies. We forever will be grateful.

Mr. Speaker, we are deeply saddened by the loss of Jason Dean Cunningham but our resolve is strong. Our enemies must know that when they attack us they will be destroyed.

I ask my colleagues to join me in sending our heartfelt sympathy to Jason's family and to all those who have lost loved ones in the pursuit of freedom.